

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

UNCLAS STATE 170099

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, OAS, PN

SUBJECT: OASGA RESOLUTION ON PANAMA CANAL TOLLS

REF: STATE 168858

1. THE EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON JULY 1 ADOPTED A RESOLUTION ENTITLED 'REPORT ON THE
ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INCREASES IN PANAMA CANAL TOLLS' (REFTEL).
IT WAS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY CHILE, ECUADOR AND PERU. THE
U.S. VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE RESOLUTION SINCE IT DOES NOTHING
MORE THAN REQUEST A SECRETARIAT STUDY. WE HAD ABSTAINED ON
SIMILAR RESOLUTIONS AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS BECAUSE THOSE VER-
SIONS ALSO CALLED ON THE U.S. TO ADJUST THE TOLLS. ALL
OTHER DELEGATIONS ALSO VOTED AFFIRMATIVELY EXCEPT PANAMA,
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WHICH ABSTAINED ON THE GROUND THAT IT HAD NOT PARTICIPATED
IN SETTING CANAL TOLLS, AND RESERVED ITS POSITION ON OAS
AUTHORITY ON THE SUBJECT.

2. THE TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION IS AS FOLLOWS:

'WHEREAS:

AT ITS SEVENTH REGULAR SESSION, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION AG/RES. 284 (VII-U/77) ON THE INCREASES IN PANAMA CANAL TOLLS ADOPTED IN 1974 AND 1976; THROUGH RESOLUTION CIES/CECON/38 (VII-77), THE SEVENTH REGULAR MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION (CECON) INSTRUCTED THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT TO PREPARE A REPORT ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE FOREIGN TRADE OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES THAT USE THE PANAMA CANAL, OF THE TOLL INCREASES ADOPTED IN 1974 AND 1976 AND OF THE NEW NET TONNAGE MEASURING SYSTEM FOR SHIPS PASSING THROUGH THE CANAL,

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
RESOLVES:

TO REQUEST THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT TO SUBMIT TO THE NINTH REGULAR SESSION, THROUGH CECON AND THE INTER-AMERICAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (CIES), A REPORT ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE TOLL INCREASES ADOPTED IN 1974 AND 1976 AND THE NEW NET TONNAGE MEASURING SYSTEM FOR SHIPS PASSING THROUGH THE CANAL ON THE FOREIGN TRADE OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES THAT USE THAT INTEROCEANIC WATERWAY."

3. THE U.S. MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT REGARDING ITS
VOTE:

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"THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT OBJECT TO A STUDY BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PANAMA CANAL TOLL INCREASES IN 1974 AND 1976. THE STUDY IS REQUESTED FOR PRESENTATION TO THE NINTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WHICH IS LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE TOWARD THE END OF 1979.

WE WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT IN LATE 1979, PANAMA CANAL TOLLS WILL BE RAISED AGAIN BY AN AS YET UNKNOWN PERCENTAGE BASED ON INCREASED OPERATING COSTS. THE STUDY THAT THE RESOLUTION CALLS FOR WILL THEREFORE BE OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS BEFORE IT IS CONSIDERED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

WHILE THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT OBJECT TO THE STUDY AS PROPOSED, IF IT WERE DEFERRED UNTIL 1980 IT COULD ALSO INCLUDE THE IMPACT OF THE TOLL INCREASE PROJECTED FOR LATE 1979." VANCE

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